

**FIGURES OF
SPEECH; PP. 1-251**

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Figures of Speech; pp. 1-251 by S. M. Burnham

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S. M. BURNHAM

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Figures of Speech

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INTRODUCTION.

Writers and public speakers in all ages and countries, have been accustomed to use what are called figures of speech, that is "expressing abstract or material ideas by words suggesting pictures or images from the physical world."

These figures are derived from so many objects and events, that it would be almost impossible to name all of them, while many are so well understood, as to require no explanation, and others are so peculiar as to awaken surprise.

Every person makes use of figures in speaking or writing, and no language would be complete without them, since they add so much force and elegance to speech, and often lend to poetry its charm.

The sacred writings abound in figures derived from almost every object in nature, including the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, and from nearly every condition of the human mind, and of man's relation to his Creator, from heaven, earth, and hades, and the beings inhabiting these places. The ancient poets and prophets afford a vast store-house of interesting

and sublime figures, for subsequent writers and orators. Some modern writings, contain beautiful, graceful, elegant, and sublime figures of speech, while others are lacking in these qualities.

The following are some of the objects that have afforded metaphorical emblems for speakers and writers, as recorded by rhetoricians :

Natural agents, as light, darkness, heat, cold, thunder, lightening, the rainbow, ect.

Celestial agents, as the sun, moon, planets, stars, and others.

Terrestrial agents, as wind, storms, clouds, air, rain, snow, etc.

The mineral kindom, as precious stones, iron, steel, stones, flint.

The vegetable kingdom, as trees, plants, flowers, leaves, roots.

The animal kindom as the ox, sheep, horse, dog, lion, tiger, serpent, eagle, lark, dove, ant' worm, etc.

Human industry, as a shepherd with his flocks the operations of the farmer, as ploughing, sowing, reaping, the work of the architect, as buildings, houses, temples, walls, etc.

Naval affairs, as ship, vessel, sails, compass, wreck.

From war. Figures derived from this source, are numerous and expressive, and comprise the sword, arrow, bow, march, battle, defeat, victory captain, commander, soldier, and in government, king, prince, court, law, minister, judge, and social relations, as father, mother, child, brother, sister, friend.

In public communications, as road, path, highway, post, letter, harbor, port, etc.

Teachings, as master, pupil, lesson, sum, fraction, addition, counting, subtracting, multiplying. For the fine arts, as music, melody, harmony rhythm, painting, colors, engraving, sculpture, etc., and of the mechanic art, buildings of different styles, with their varied departments.

Religious, as God, angels, idols, prayer, sacraments, bible, priest, sacrifice, etc.

Recreations, as games, sports, dancing, gladiators, and other amusements.

Human sensations, as sweet, soft, charm, smile, frown, anger, hatred, love, pity, ect.

Many others could be mentioned, but these are sufficient to show the predominance of figurative language in all departments of literature and business, both in ancient and modern times.

Illustrations have been selected generally from ancient authors, especially the sacred writ-

ers, and many of their figures are used at the present day. The figures of speech are so numerous, that it would require volumes to mention and describe them, while some of them are beautiful, appropriate, and sublime, others are puerile, amusing, obscure and repulsive, but language deprived of them, would be wanting in beauty, power, and grandeur, and especially in the charm of poetical character.

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Figures of Speech.

Illustrations.

CHAPTER I.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

A rhetorical figure has been defined as "a mode of expressing abstract or immaterial ideas which suggest pictures or images, from the material world. It is a deviation from the plain and ordinary mode of speaking, with a view to greater effect."

These figures are arranged under a variety of names and have been classed as the Simile, Metaphor, Allegory, Antithesis, Synecdoche, Epigram, Hyperbole, Interrogation, Exclamation, Apostrophe, Climax, Irony, Personification, and others.

Simile. A sense of agreement is the chief inventive power of the mind, and there is no avocation of the human intellect, perhaps, so broad,

as the study of agreement among the objects and events of the world. Every person is frequently dependent upon the similarity or identity of different things, and in narration, description, or exposition similitude renders the subject more intelligible.

Metaphor. This is a figure by which one thing is used for another that it resembles. An appropriate metaphor is highly graphic and striking, and has been a favorite figure with orators, poets, and other writers, in all countries and ages. The sacred writers are eminent for their use of rhetorical figures, especially the metaphor and they have been used in ordinary conversation from early times to the present, while the English language is constantly expanding by the use of metaphorical expressions; as examples, we speak of "killing time," the "march of events," "flash of thought," "lost his wits," "a narrow circle," "a fiery temper," and numerous other figures.

Metaphor is frequently used to express the silent operations of the mind. These were formerly denoted by some material object, but more recently, they are designated by secret emotions. As illustrations of the metaphor, one writer has given the following expressive examples: "Knowledge is light," "Passion is fire," "Depression of spirits is gloom," "A ray of hope